

**CHILDREN & FAMILIES COMMISSION OF FRESNO COUNTY**

**Regular Meeting  
December 5, 2001 - 3:00 p.m.**

**Children & Families Commission Offices  
University of California Building  
550 E. Shaw, Suite 215  
Fresno, CA**

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 1**

**Recommendations:**

Approve Commission Minutes – November 7, 2001 Regular Meeting

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 7, 2001 MEETING**

**Present:** Chair Bob Waterston, Vice Chair Luisa Medina, Secretary/Treasurer Gary Carozza, Commissioners Marion Karian, Roseanne Lascano, LeeAnn Parry; Oscar Sablan, Executive Director Steve Gordon; Commission Counsel Juliana Gmur

**Absent:** Kathleen McIntyre (excused)

Commissioner Waterston called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.; a quorum was established.

**1. Approval of Minutes – October 3, 2001 meeting**

***Commissioner Medina (Carozza second) moved approval of the minutes as presented. Motion approved unanimously.***

**2. Receive and Approve Commission's Annual Report and Financial Audit for fiscal year 2000-2001**

Program Operations Coordinator Kendra Rogers explained the process required by the State Commission regarding annual reporting and audit. She stated the required state report was submitted in draft form by Oct. 15 as required, and is being presented to the Commission for the first step in the Fresno County process. Staff recommendation is for approval to present the report and audit to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors for review and comment as required by County Ordinance 98-017 (rev. 99-012).

Commissioner Carozza asked whether the ending balance of \$21 million on the audit was the starting balance for FY 2001-02, or just the ending balance for all funds received to date. Staff Accountant Lyn Higginson and John Chessum, Baker, Peterson & Franklin, audit accountants, responded that the starting figure from the audit was a combined figure, totaling \$23,148,000.

***Commissioner Medina (Carozza second) moved approval to submit the annual report and audit to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors for review and comment. Motion approved unanimously.***

### **3. Receive Financial Report for Quarter Ending September 30, 2001**

Higginson presented for review the financial report for the period ending September 30, 2001. She said that beginning in December, financial statements will be presented on a monthly basis.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Carozza commented that he liked the format including the “% of Budget”, and asked about the line item for Revenues being at 247% of budget; Higginson explained that the revenue category was originally under budgeted, specifically for interest income, and no budget adjustments have been made to date. Budget adjustments will be recommended later.

***Commissioner Carozza (Lascano second) moved to accept the financial report for July 1-September 30, 2001 as presented. Motion approved unanimously.***

### **4. Approve Contracts for RFP 01-C Funding**

Rogers explained that the contracts for the funding awards approved by the Commission in September for the RFP 01-C are being presented for approval. She stated there were no changes in scope of work or funding amounts from those approved earlier, and that Commission counsel has reviewed and approved all contracts.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Medina asked for assurance that the Commission would be brought further funding considerations for the three capacity/planning grants awarded (Centro La Familia, Fresno Center for New Americans and The Living Room) prior to the end of the funding year, based on the results of the planning/capacity grants and the proposals submitted under RFP 01-C. Rogers responded that this was the case.

***Commissioner Medina (Carozza second) moved approval of the contracts for RFP 01-C funding. Motion approved unanimously.***

### **5. Approve MOUs for Evaluation Services**

Executive Director Gordon explained the current contract for evaluation services expires on Nov. 10, and to ensure continuity, staff is recommending that Fresno County, through Memorandum of Agreement, become a participant in the consortium for evaluation and data management services put together by Kern County Children & Families Commission, which currently includes Kern, Inyo, Tulare and Kings Counties. Kern County is contracting with CSU-Bakersfield for evaluation and CS&O for data management. Kern County will act as the fiscal agent for the MOUs. Cost is projected to be the same or less than currently budgeted. Gordon introduced Dr. Kenneth Nyberg, CSU-Bakersfield and Brian Goodall, CS&O.

**Public Comment:** Joy Grado, Marjaree Mason Center, asked about the work service providers have already done with SG Associates. She was assured that the “logic models” already created will still be utilized and service providers will be able to move forward from where they have left off.

Hugo Morales, Radio Bilingue, said he felt it made a lot of sense to have the evaluation and data management done across the valley, and that the data presented on a valley-wide basis will be even more meaningful.

***Commissioner Carozza (Medina second) moved approval of the MOUs with Kern County CFC for evaluation and data management services. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **6. Approve Contract for School Readiness Consultant**

Rogers stated that the Commission approved moving ahead with the School Readiness Initiative at the September meeting. In order to participate in Phase I (first round funding), applications must be received by the State Commission by January 15, 2002. Participation in Phase 1 assures a 2:1 dollar match, vs. a 1:1 match for future phases. The State Commission had planned to provide technical assistance to all County Commissions, through an RFP process; since that is not yet completed, \$20,000 mini-grants are being offered to County CFC's to obtain local technical assistance. Staff is recommending retaining Key Writing Associates (KWA) as a consultant, at a cost not to exceed \$9500 paid from this mini-grant. KWA will work with the schools and school communities in developing the school readiness applications that will be submitted by the Commission to the State by January 15, 2002.

Rogers stated that all the Fresno County schools with an API ranking of 3 or below were invited to an informational meeting put on by the State Commission Education Programs Consultant Roberta Peck. Of the 75+ schools invited, only approximately 10 attended. According to Peck, Fresno CFC is unique among CFCs by offering assistance to schools on the preparation of Phase 1 applications; most County Commissions are merely distributing the RFP forms to the schools and asking them to submit applications to them for transmittal to the State Commission. Schools participating in Phase 1 must meet certain, specific criteria (community assessment, partnerships/collaborations in place, parent support, stability and support of school administration) and staff intent is for KWA to work with 1-3 schools on January 15 submissions. Other schools will be phased in over time, with Phase II applications due March 15; Phase III, June 15, etc.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Medina requested that the Commission be furnished with drafts of the applications prior to the January meeting. Commissioner Parry asked about how community input will be accommodated in this short time frame. Nancy Key, KWA, responded that was one reason for not wanting to attempt to work with more than two or three schools, because it will be very intensive between now and Jan. 15. She stated if everything is in place now (there is a working collaborative in place, assessments have been completed, etc.) the need for face-to-face meetings will be diminished, but there will still be the need for some meetings. Parry questioned whether input from outside the schools would be obtained; Key responded the entire school community would be involved. Parry also asked about how the Commission can be assured that in this planning the schools take into consideration the early childhood development and education knowledge base and the needs of young children.

Carozza expressed concern about the link between our focus on children 0-5 and the Healthy Start focus on school-age children, the link between a school-based program (Healthy Start) and pre-school children and their readiness for school. Parry stated she felt that where there were no school-aged children in a family, those families were sometimes overlooked by school-based programs. She also expressed concern that some schools were currently over impacted by programs and do not have facilities for any additional programs or physical space to add additional facilities.

Commissioner Sablan suggested that school board members, as well as superintendents and principals, be included in invitations to future meetings for new or similar initiatives.

Dr. Nyberg, CSU-Bakersfield, offered that the School Readiness Initiative identifies five areas that the successful school is going to have to demonstrate they are ready to accept those children.

**Public Comment:** Vicki Hoyle, Fresno County EOC, suggested that there are some strategic planning methods in terms of how outreach for the Commission can be done, and a number of groups that meet regularly which can help with the outreach, working from the bottom back up. She also asked for assurance that both child development expertise and early childhood education be involved in this initiative.

**Commissioner Medina (Carozza second) moved that the contract with Key Writing Associates for consultant services be approved. Motion carried unanimously.**

## **7. Approve Contract for Investment Consultant**

Higginson stated that at the September 5, 2001 meeting, the Commission approved the hiring of an investment analyst to review existing investments and recommend investment policy and some long-term strategies for sustainability. An RFQ was sent to approximately 20 investment advisors and analysts; proposals were received from two firms. Staff recommendation is to contract with Regency Investment Advisors, Inc., at a cost of approximately \$5,000, funds to come from current budget for consultants.

**Discussion:** Stephen W. Guinn, Regency Investment Advisors, Inc., stated they are a fully owned subsidiary of California Bank & Trust, providing both management and consulting services to clients, including individuals, corporations and non-profits. He stated they would look at the current investments, investment policy, recommend strategies for long-term growth and sustainability and monitor future investments for conformity with investment policy.

Commissioner Carozza asked that the pooled investment strategy offered by the county to the Commission be looked at as well as opportunities outside the county.

**Commissioner Carozza (Medina second) moved approval for the contract with Regency Investment Advisors. Motion carried unanimously.**

## **8. Authorize Staff to Negotiate an Agreement (contract) with the Fresno County Child Care Local Planning Council to be the Program Administrator for the Fresno County C.A.R.E.S. Program**

Rogers reviewed the Commission's previous approval of \$2 million for Retention Incentives for the Early Care and Education Providers Pilot Project and Commission approval to apply for a 25% matching grant from the State Commission, which has been granted; we will receive \$500,000 from the state in matching dollars. At that time, the Commission also directed staff to coordinate with the Fresno County Child Care Local Planning Council (LPC) to make this a countywide plan in conjunction with AB212 (approximately \$430,000 from State Dept. of Education), which the LPC is administering. Commission staff has been meeting with the LPC's Education and Training Task Team to develop a countywide plan for training and compensation for childcare providers that encompasses both Prop. 10 funds and the AB212 moneys. Staff is recommending that the LPC be named as administrator for all funds in order to make this plan comprehensive and coherent. The LPC will take responsibility for doing outreach to providers, especially in the rural areas, working with providers to develop professional development plans, maintain those plans, and do the follow up with providers to ensure completion. Staff is requesting Commission approval to negotiate an agreement with LPC in hopes that this program can be launched in January 2002.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Sablan asked if there were any representatives on the LPC from western Fresno County. Mary Arriaga, LPC, responded that there were no Council members from the Westside, but several individuals from the Westside have attended the Education and Training Task Team meetings.

Commissioner Carozza asked what “gaps” were left by AB212; Rogers responded that AB212 only provides stipends for child care workers who work in state subsidized centers, and Prop. 10 moneys will allow for stipends for workers in private centers and licensed family day care. Criteria established in the application process provide for dollar amounts attached to ECE units earned, and “bonus” stipends for serving children in rural areas, infants, or those with special needs, etc. Carozza further stated he wants to see consistency in policy implementation, and he is currently not sure about this.

Commissioner Medina said she was comfortable with the direction this project was going, but had a number of questions around the scope of work and what the expectations are as the Commission moves forward with service integration. She asked about the length of the agreement, whether Prop. 10 funds would only be used for stipends or if administrative costs are involved. Gordon reiterated that staff is only requesting approval to continue negotiations (scope of work, budget, outcomes) toward a final agreement within the confines of the current strategic plan which will be brought back to the Commission for review, comment and final approval.

***Commissioner Carozza (Sablan second) moved approval for staff to negotiate an agreement with the Local Planning Council for the Fresno C.A.R.E.S. program. Such agreement will be brought back to the Commission for approval. Motion carried unanimously.***

## **9. Administrative Items**

### **a. Delegation of Authority**

Gordon presented three areas for increased “delegation of authority” from the Commission to enable the Commission to move in a timely manner.

- (a) Approve and execute non-programmatic contracts (e.g., consultants) up to \$25,000 if within existing budget limits.

Gordon explained that the School Readiness consultant was a good example of where, although there was a need to get a head start on the project, it was necessary to wait a month to bring a contract to the Commission for approval; the investment analyst is another example. Staff recommends that, as long as they are within budget limits, the Executive Director be given authority to sign non-programmatic contracts up to \$25,000. Gordon stated that this is consistent with other counties.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Carozza stated there was another way to lessen the burden on the Executive Director by authorizing the Commission Chairman to sign such contracts between board meetings up to a designated dollar amount. Commissioner Medina agreed that this measure of protection for staff was probably the best route to take.

Commissioner Parry expressed her concern about not having any functioning committees to provide dialogue for the Commission; Gordon stated that Commission committees will be a principal agenda item at the next meeting.

(b) Execute contracts after Commission authorization.

Gordon explained that the ability to sign contracts with no change in scope of work or dollars amounts with service providers once the Commission has approved an award will allow for greater flexibility for staff to negotiate the final contracts and starting dates for those contracts. Staff has worked with County Counsel to develop contract templates that are now approved and in use.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Medina asked if the intent is, that once the Commission has approved an award and there is no change in scope of work or dollar amount, that final execution of a contract does not have to come back to the Commission for approval a second time. Gordon responded that this was correct.

(c) Increase limits of check signing authority to cover all recurring expenses and to \$5,000 for non-recurring expenses.

Gordon stated that within the confines of an approved budget, the ability to sign checks up to \$5,000 (rather than the existing \$500) will save time and energy for both staff and Commissioners. Currently staff takes all checks over \$500 to a Commissioner's office for signature, or a Commissioner must make a trip to the Commission office to sign checks; this includes checks for recurring costs, such as rent, telephone, equipment leases, etc. Checks over \$500 will continue to be co-signed, with a second staff signature.

**Commissioner Carozza (Medina second) moved the following:**

- a. **The Commission Chair be authorized to sign contracts up to \$25,000 for non-programmatic items between regular board meetings;**
- b. **As long as there are no changes in scope of work or dollar amounts, the Executive Director be authorized to execute program contracts;**
- c. **The Executive Director be delegated the authority to sign checks for all recurring budgeted costs and up to \$5,000 for non-recurring costs, with staff co-signature for checks over \$500.**

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**9. b. Commission Staffing Pattern and Salary Levels**

Gordon stated that after a little over a year's experience of Commission needs, the "best educated guesses" utilized in the original staffing patterns and salary levels have been adequate. However, as the Commission moves forward with additional initiatives and potential programs, the execution of an evaluation contract, and other needs, some shifts in staffing are recommended. He presented the following staffing plan and salary levels for approval:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (1) Executive Director            | \$75,000-\$85,000                               |
| (1) Office Assistant/Receptionist | \$22,000-\$29,000                               |
| (1) Administrative Assistant      | \$29,000-\$35,000                               |
| (1) Accountant                    | \$35,000-\$50,000                               |
| (1) Program Coordinator           | \$35,000-\$50,000                               |
| (2) Program Specialists           | \$35,000-\$50,000                               |
| (1) Special Projects Coordinator  | \$50,000-\$60,000                               |
| (1) *School Readiness Coordinator | \$50,000-\$60,000 (*funded by State Commission) |

The same number of positions (eight) is being recommended, with some changes in responsibilities. Salary ranges are recommended for increase to ensure the ability to retain staff, since a number of current staff members are at or near the high end of the existing salary range. Gordon stated that current staff program specialists are comfortable with the workload of approximately 25 projects each. The recommendation is for the vacant third program specialist position be converted into a Master's level position and hire a "Special Projects Coordinator" to handle program such as retention and training, mini-grants, and additional programs that require oversight for an overall program rather than to individual grantees. The Evaluation Analyst position has been very valuable over the past year as the Commission searched, selected and contracted for evaluation and data management services. The elimination of this position is a natural progression through this process of establishing good relations with our evaluation contractors. Gordon pointed out that the School Readiness Coordinator position will be funded from State Commission moneys allocated to the County Commission for initiative implementation; this person would start working with the School Readiness consultant just hired and then take over the initiative from there. Someone with an early childhood background and school experience will be actively sought for this position.

**Discussion:** Commissioner Sablan stated he felt that all staff should be doing some continuing education in these particular areas.

Commissioner Carozza asked about the process of moving staff from one level to the next and expressed his concern that this is still insufficient staffing. He feels that the number of staff assigned to monitor/review the contracts in place is insufficient to meet the demands of Prop. 10 and discharging the Commission's responsibility for supplantation and appropriate use of funds. He wants to see someone on staff with an early childhood background; would like to see the Director return to the Commission with recommendations for COLAs built in to salaries for retention that can be guaranteed and reviewed periodically; and is concerned that in depth financial evaluation is not currently being done to determine supplantation.

Commissioner Waterston asked if there was a need for additional staffing; Gordon responded that he has considered at least one additional position, a "civic engagement coordinator" who would work with the community, especially the rural areas. Gordon stated that he has been cognizant of the community's desire to not see just another bureaucracy created, with a large overhead administration, so he has tried to be careful to keep the administrative figures on the low side without giving up quality. In regard to the workload of the program specialists, Gordon stated they are doing quarterly on-site visits to project providers, receive and review quarterly reports, and provide technical assistance to the providers; current staff feels they are capable of administering the current workload of 25 projects a piece. In the new staff structure, the Program Specialists will report to the Program Coordinator that will add additional assistance to the process. This will also free the Executive Director, with fewer direct reports, to accomplish more of the responsibilities and duties in his job description.

Commissioner Karian asked whether this staffing pattern would allow the Commission to carry out many of the elements of the Institute and other strategies in the Strategic Plan; Gordon responded that he felt it would. Karian also asked about the database that was being put together; Gordon responded that the Evaluation Analyst will put that together before the position is terminated. Dr. Nyberg reiterated that where baseline data is not currently available, through the evaluation contract, that data will be gathered, and existing databases will be maintained.

Commissioner Medina said that, in relation to staffing patterns, getting the Commission committee structure in place is important and those committees will require staff support. She suggested maintaining the third Program Specialist position in addition to the staffing pattern suggested.

**Public Comment:** Vicki Hoyle, Fresno County EOC, questioned if quarterly site visitations were adequate to evaluate programs. Program Specialist Christina Ledesma stated while only quarterly site visits are made, the program specialists maintain on-going dialogue with the individual project coordinators that provides for early warning of potential problems. Commissioner Carozza said that the Commission had a legal responsibility to ensure that there is no reduction in capacity of the programs we touch. Commissioner Sablan said he saw much of the monitoring of projects as a credibility issue, and that the Commission had to be credible to the public. He felt that rather than not giving funds, the Commission should be aiding providers to ensure that Commission funds are spent wisely.

Joy Grado, Marjaree Mason Center, stated that as a grantee she has had numerous conversations and consultations with and assistance from staff. At least one quarter is needed to start things in motion before indicators are in place to begin to determine if the project is moving along as projected or if additional monitoring and/or assistance is needed.

Vicki Hoyle raised some concerns about the elimination of the evaluation analyst position.

Ed Burke, A.S.K. Ed. Consulting Group, suggested that attention needed to be focused on more than viewing a program once a month, that the involvement and monitoring needed to be more on-going and that staff members be bilingual so that they can fully relate to the programs in the field.

Commissioner Parry stated she felt that an early childhood education background is the key to the School Readiness Coordinator and that the formation of committees for the Commission needs to be a high priority.

Program Specialist George Petersen stated that as part of the evaluation process, each service provider is developing their own "logic model" which looks at performance as one component, and this model is proving to be a good process for the providers.

Evaluation Analyst Carmen T. Mendoza stated that she is expanding the original concept of a "database" to make it very thorough so that it will be of maximum use to the Commission. A draft is currently out to peer review. She offered to donate her time as a volunteer, as her contribution to the community, to continue to maintain the database after her employment with the Commission ends.

***Commissioner Medina (Carozza second) moved that the changes in staffing plan and salary levels as presented, with the retention of a third program specialist position, be approved. Motion approved unanimously.***

#### **10. Public Comment**

None.



## **11. Announcements**

Director Gordon announced the following:

- Prop. 10 funds were awarded to Sanger Unified School District to establish a childcare facility for the Sanger community. The grand opening was held on November 1<sup>st</sup>, including coverage by three local TV stations (ABC, Channel 30; NBC, Channel 24; and Univision, Channel 21). He showed a video of the coverage.
- He has received a scholarship from the State Commission to attend the national Zero to Three Conference in San Diego the end of November.
- The State Commission officially launched the New Parent Kits Nov. 1. Staff is working on a distribution plan for the county, with parent kits available to every new parent in the county sometime after January 1. (Commissioner Carozza volunteered his department to help with that distribution.)
- Program Specialist Christina Ledesma has made several appearances on Spanish language TV and radio, advertising the Commission and the New Parent Kits (Univision, Channel 21; KYNO, Radio Guadalupe-1300 AM; KGST Radio-1600 AM).

Ed Burke, A.S.K. Ed., announced that A.S.K. Ed.'s Optimal Parenting Program would be featured on Radio Bilingue November 8, with parents from the program participating.

## **Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.